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ABSTRACT

To provide a common frame of reference, the Michigan Employability Skills Task Force created a working construct of employability skill categories. The draft framework extended beyond academic competence to include interpersonal, group, and adaptability skills. After task force discussions, the initial five skill categories were compressed into three: academic, personal management, and teamwork. Policy recommendations were made regarding establishment of a forum among education, government, and business to translate the employability skills profile into courses and training; use of the profile by the public employment and training system; and development of a plan to assess individuals based on the profile. The task force added more representatives from education, government, and the unions. Four standing committees were created: communications, legislative, education systems development, and assessment. The task force implemented policy recommendations; the standing committees focused attention on specific concerns; and the task force initiated a working structure to facilitate collaboration with state agencies. Three priorities were identified: legislative awareness; communications; and policy oversight. (Document includes 1988 and 1989 task force reports. The 1988 report contains 36 references, a working draft of the framework, and a list of task force members. Appendixes to the 1989 report include a list of task force members; results of a 1989 employability skills survey; report of an employability skills policy summit; and a state agency work plan.) (YLB)

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GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON
JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A MICHIGAN EMPLOYABILITY PROFILE

REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TASK FORCE

April 22, 1988

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	iii
Introduction	1
Overview	3
Employability Skills Profile	5
Policy Recommendations	6
Conclusion	7

Appendices:

Appendix I:	References & Suggested Readings	8
Appendix II:	Working Draft: Employability Skills Framework	12
Appendix III:	Employability Skills Task Force Membership List	17

FOREWORD

Governor James J. Blanchard's Commission on Jobs and Economic Development, co-chaired by Lee Iacocca and Doug Fraser, has been instrumental in guiding Michigan's economic recovery. A key recommendation from the Commission was that state leaders, in developing a comprehensive human investment strategy, seek the advice of a diverse group of Michigan employers to determine the skills needed to be successful in the modern workplace.

In November, 1987 the Governor's Commission convened the Employability Skills Task Force and charged it with identifying the generic skills and behaviors employers believed to be important across a broad range of business, service, and industrial sector jobs. The abilities and behaviors identified as necessary for success on any job are now contained in the Employability Skills Profile presented in this report.

It was not the intent of the Task Force to identify the specific course materials, programs or classroom content required to teach the identified skills, nor was it the intent to develop an assessment instrument to measure them. The group, however, did recognize that skills assessment would be a necessary part of the process of upgrading the Michigan worker.

Also, the Task Force purposely avoided references to specific grades or grade levels in its definition of skills. Most employers find these references and measures of little value in accurately defining worker effectiveness.

The Employability Skills Task Force was co-chaired by Ford Vice President Pete Pestillo and UAW Vice President Steve Yokich. Task Force members included a broad array of business, labor, and education leaders from across the state.

The Task Force met formally three times over a five month period and worked with representatives of the Governor's Cabinet Council on Human Investment and the State Departments of Education and Commerce to produce this report.

A listing of the Task Force members appears in the Appendices of this report.

INTRODUCTION

Technological advances and heightened domestic and international competition challenge American workers to be more skilled than ever before. In fact, American survival in the global economy will depend on the preparation and quality of the nation's human resource pool. More than anything else, the vitality of the country's education and training systems will determine our ability to meet these challenges.

Michigan's economic future too, must focus on people, teamwork, and technology. In the new world economy, it is the skills of the men and women in our offices and factories and their ability to work together in using new technologies that will determine our success in keeping the jobs we have and securing new ones.

It is clear that the context and content of work, both in the nation and in this state, have changed dramatically. For example, technological changes have increased employee autonomy. Workers at all levels are more frequently called upon to identify problems and make crucial decisions. While new technologies may sometimes mean that the depth of skill needed for any particular job may be declining, the range of required skills is increasing.

Moreover, changing production processes, competitive challenges, and the shifting of the economic base from manufacturing to the service and information sectors are causing employers to use an array of strategies that require flexibility, innovation, and teamwork on the part of employees.

Couple this with the movement toward more participative and joint management and the drive to push decision making toward workers at the point of production or sale, and it becomes obvious that what is required is a new kind of Michigan worker.

In fact, employers - those currently in Michigan as well as those considering the state as a place to locate business - will need and demand workers who have a broad set of workplace skills. These skills include, but extend beyond, simple competence in reading, writing, computation and science.

Michigan workers will also need to be adaptable to profit from the changing workplace. They will need to: set goals and develop and implement strategies to achieve them; know how to learn new information and skills; use information obtained in one context and apply it in another; identify where and from whom to access information; solve problems; and function as members of multiple work teams.

In the past, we have relied upon our public school, postsecondary, and university and job training systems to produce well educated, effective and responsible people - in short, the best trained workers in the world. And, it was this cadre of workers, unskilled and skilled laborers as well as managers, who created our preeminent position among the states and world economies.

Current economic challenges demand that we revitalize our education and training systems to equip Michigan's current and future workforce with necessary academic, personal management and teamwork skills. Further, our workers must be prepared to accept and profit from jobs, workplaces, and technologies that are in constant transition.

Economic growth will not come easily. To achieve and maintain it, we must commit ourselves to ensuring an appropriately prepared workforce. In an age where we simply must become more productive and competitive, it is critical that our citizens have the education and training necessary to benefit from the new opportunities in Michigan's workplace.

OVERVIEW

To provide a starting point for discussion and a common frame of reference, the Task Force created a working construct of employability skill categories (See appendix II) . The draft framework was simple yet bold. It extended beyond mere academic competence to include interpersonal, group, and adaptability skills required for effective performance in Michigan's changing workplace. Further, the Task Force did not confine its discussion of skills to those required for entry-level jobs because most employers want workers who are able to grow and develop within their organizations.

As a result of Task Force discussions, the initial five skill categories (academic, personal management, career mobility, group and organizational effectiveness, and adaptability) were compressed into three. The Task Force concluded that **Academic, Personal Management** and **Teamwork** skills identified in the **Employability Skills Profile** are essential for current and future Michigan workers. These skills categories may be summarized as follows:

Academic skills include those skills that provide the basic educational foundation necessary to benefit from further training and education. This category encompasses communication, comprehension, quantitative, critical thinking, and science and technology skills.

Personal Management skills include those skills related to developing the attitudes, abilities, behaviors and decision making processes associated with responsibility and dependability. Contained within this category are abilities to: set goals and implement strategies for achieving them, identify and act on personal values, and to demonstrate self discipline.

Teamwork skills include those skills that relate to an individual's ability to contribute to a group or organization's growth and development. Included in this category are interpersonal, organizational, negotiation, creativity/innovation, and leadership skills.

In constructing the Employability Skills Profile, the Task Force assumed that:

- The Profile would be a first step in identifying employer needs in Michigan workplaces. **Continued dialogue is necessary** to translate this statement of needs into the course material, programs, class content, and training necessary to produce workers with at least minimal proficiency in all three categories.

- Any profile of employability **skills must be generic in nature**, given the wide variety and complexity of jobs in Michigan industries (e.g., service, manufacturing, agricultural, and high technology).

- Basic academic skills - the ability to read, write, compute, and communicate are fundamental tools in a work environment. As important as they are, however, they no longer stand alone as guideposts to success. These basic **Academic skills are directly and inextricably interrelated with Personal Management and Teamwork skills.** All three skills categories should be viewed together to accurately profile the successful Michigan worker.

- Academic, Personal Management and Teamwork **skills exist on a continuum.** That is, these skills should not be viewed as merely "present" or "absent" in any Michigan worker or student preparing to enter the state's labor force.

  Additionally, any worker or student who aspires to a higher paying job must realize that proficiency in all three skill categories will be required to reach that goal.

- While not specifically addressed in the Employability Skills Profile, the **importance of vocational-technical skills should not be overlooked** or minimized. The value of specific vocational training will, in addition to the Profile skills, often enhance one's employment opportunities, qualify one for special job classifications, and lead to ultimate success in the workplace.

- Academic, Personal Management and Teamwork **skills may be difficult to measure.** That is, these skill categories do not necessarily lend themselves to simple "paper and pencil" evaluation. The Task Force did not, however, exclude any skill from consideration due to measurement difficulties.

The **Employability Skills Profile** that follows may be viewed as a descriptive definition of an ideal job applicant. We invite the reader to work his or her way through each of the categories and to imagine the excitement with a candidate who had all of the skills listed in the Profile. Of course, the Profile is not intended to be used to actually select employees. Rather, it was developed to simply highlight those skills employers suggest be addressed by the state's education and training systems and to inform current and future workers of employer expectations.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROFILE

Three Categories of skills will be required of Michigan workers in the future:

ACADEMIC SKILLS (Those skills which provide the basic foundation necessary for a person to get, keep, and progress on a job)	PERSONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS (Those skills related to developing the attitudes and behaviors required to get, keep, and progress on a job)	TEAMWORK SKILLS (Those skills needed to work with others on a job)
MICHIGAN EMPLOYERS WANT A PERSON WHO CAN:	MICHIGAN EMPLOYERS WANT A PERSON WHO CAN:	MICHIGAN EMPLOYERS WANT A PERSON WHO CAN:
o Understand spoken language and speak in the language in which business is conducted. o Read written materials (including graphs, charts and displays). o Write in the language in which business is conducted. o Understand and solve problems involving basic arithmetic and use the results. o Use the tools and equipment necessary to get a job done. o Access and use specialized knowledge when necessary (e.g., the sciences or skilled trades) to get a job done. o Think and act logically by using the steps of the Scientific Method (i.e., identify problems, collect information, form opinions and draw conclusions).	o Identify personal job-related interests, strengths, options and opportunities. o Demonstrate personal values and ethics in the workplace (e.g., honesty, fairness, and respect for others). o Exercise a sense of responsibility. o Demonstrate self control. o Show pride in one's work. o Be enthusiastic about the work to be done. o Follow written or verbal directions. o Learn new skills and ways of doing things. o Identify and suggest new ideas for getting a job done. o Be a leader or a follower depending upon what is necessary to get a job done.	o Identify with the goals, norms, values, customs and culture of the group. o Communicate with all members of a group. o Show sensitivity to the thoughts and opinions of others in a group. o Use a team approach to identify problems and devise solutions to get a job done. o Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results. o Function in changing work-settings and in changing groups. o Determine when to be a leader or a follower depending upon what is necessary to get a job done. o Show sensitivity to the needs of women and ethnic and racial minorities. o Be loyal to a group.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Employability Skills Task Force recognizes that action must be taken quickly to prepare our citizens to confront the competitive challenges that face us today. We believe that the following recommendations will be useful in guiding that action. The Task Force recommends that:

1. A forum be established to facilitate communication among business and labor leaders, educators, and governmental officials to translate the Employability Skills Profile into the course material, programs, class content, and training necessary to produce competent workers.

2. The Employability Skills Profile should be used by the Governor, The Michigan Job Training Coordinating Council, The Michigan Department of Labor, and any other appropriate governmental units to guide the activities of the state's public employment and training and education systems.

   Providers within the public employment and training system should prepare participants with at least minimal competence in the identified employability skills. Programmatic funding should be based, in part, on an individual provider's ability to do so.

3. Public and private sector employers should be advised and encouraged to monitor worldwide competition and to routinely upgrade skill levels of employees within the existing workforce, anticipate and refine future skill needs and communicate them to the public employment and training and education systems.

4. An advisory team of qualified consultants knowledgable about measurement and existing assessment strategies and instruments should be identified to oversee the development of a plan for assessing individuals based on the Employability Skills Profile.

   Assessment of an individual based on the Employability Skills Profile should be for personal diagnosis, counseling, and developmental planning only. Also, any assessment should be sensitive to the unique needs of women and minority groups.

CONCLUSION

It was the intent of the Task Force to "paint" a picture of the type of worker needed to meet the challenges of the changing Michigan workplace. This is the purpose of the Employability Skills Profile.

It is the hope of the Task Force that this Profile not be viewed as a final product, but rather as the focus for dialogue between business, education, labor, and government leaders. The Profile is the employers' "talking piece" to describe the human resource product we need.

It is both a policy statement and a political document - one that we hope provides guidance to state leaders regarding the skills and standards that our education and training systems should be directed to address. We encourage policy makers to continue to view Michigan's employer community as an active participant in the development and implementation of the state's human investment strategy.

Preparing our citizens for good, well-paying competitive jobs is not an easy task. No one can or should be expected to take on this burden alone. Educating for employment is a community responsibility. Business and labor leaders, educators and government officials must actively demonstrate their committment to the state's public education and training systems. They must also work together to develop and manage an integrated system for educating, training, and retraining the Michigan workforce.

Indeed, creating and maintaining a comprehensive education and training system may be the most critical challenge facing Michigan's long-term ability to be economically competitive, maintain the vitality of our public institutions, enhance our quality of life, and protect the personal dignity of our citizens.

Appendix I

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Appendix II

Working Draft

Employability Skills Framework

MARCH,1988

WORKING DRAFT

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK

Task Force members looked at the following categories as part of a training or developmental profile. While the Task Force believed that workers should probably have minimal competence in all of these skills, the degree of mastery required would be dependent on their jobs, positions within an organization, and desired career goals. Based on Task Force discussions, the skills included within this initial framework were compressed into three categories - Academic, Personal Management, and Teamwork.

ACADEMIC

ACADEMIC includes those skills that provide the basic educational foundation necessary to benefit from further training or education

COMMUNICATION SKILLS	the ability to produce language in spoken or written form
COMPREHENSION SKILLS	the ability to understand, analyze, and use written and verbal communication, documents, and prose such as editorials, news stories, poems, and the like
QUANTITATIVE SKILLS	the ability to solve basic math, algebra and geometry problems and to apply these skills in solving word problems
SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY SKILLS	the ability to understand and apply basic scientific principles and to use commonly available technology

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT includes the attitudes, abilities and behaviors associated with a sense of responsibility, self discipline, pride, and enthusiasm

GOAL SETTING	the ability to identify personal objectives and to develop and implement strategies for achieving them
ETHICS	the ability to identify personal values and integrate them into one's life
SELF DISCIPLINE	the ability to follow instructions, behave appropriately and to satisfy basic job or school requirements such as punctuality and attendance

CAREER MOBILITY

CAREER MOBILITY includes technical skills or knowledge that is directly related to getting and keeping a job

"WORLD OF WORK" AWARENESS	the knowledge to identify one's own occupational interests, strengths, options, and opportunities
EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS	the ability to prepare a resume, complete a job application, and interview effectively

GROUP AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

GROUP AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS includes those skills that impact an individual's ability to contribute to an organization's growth and development

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	the ability to work as a team member, and to communicate clearly and appropriately with both superiors and subordinates
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS	the ability to identify the norms and customs of a particular organization and to use that knowledge to accomplish work goals and objectives
NEGOTIATION SKILLS	the ability to identify what one wants, articulate it, and make a meaningful contribution to the decision making process of a group
CREATIVITY/INNOVATION SKILLS	the ability to use information, knowledge and beliefs to generate unique solutions to problems
LEADERSHIP SKILLS	the ability to nurture and develop individuals as well as foster team commitment to the achievement of organizational goals

ADAPTABILITY

ADAPTABILITY includes those skills that allow a person to accept and profit from change in any sphere of his/her life. These skills should be measured in the context of the preceding four skill clusters

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS	the ability to identify a problem, analyze it, and devise a solution
"LEARNING HOW TO LEARN" SKILLS	the ability to process and retain information, identify when it is necessary to obtain new information or training, and to apply information, knowledge or skills in new or unfamiliar situations
CULTURAL/SOCIAL SKILLS	the ability to function within a variety of social contexts, both familiar and unfamiliar

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EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TASK FORCE

PROGRESS REPORT
TO

THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AND

THE MICHIGAN STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Peter J. Pestillo
Chairman

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TASK FORCE
October, 1989

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1: Foreward ..... Pages 1-3

Section 2: Progress Update ..... Pages 4-7

Section 3: Task Force Priorities, 1989 - 1990 ..... Page 8

Section 4: Conclusion ..... Page 9

Appendices

Appendix 1 — Employability Skills Task Force Membership List

Appendix 2 — Summary Results: Michigan Employer Survey

Appendix 3 — Report on March 10, 1988 Employability Skills Policy Summit

Appendix 4 — Michigan Employability Skills Strategy: State Work Plan

SECTION 1: FOREWARD

In November, 1987, the Governor's Commission on Jobs and Economic Development chaired by Lee Iacocca and Doug Fraser convened the Employability Skills Task Force and charged it with identifying the skills Michigan employers believe important to success in the modern workplace.

Chaired by Ford Vice President, Pete Pestillo, and UAW Vice President, Steve Yokich, the Task Force concluded that Michigan workers need:

- A new and higher order of academic skills. Workers will need both general knowledge and information as well as that necessary for their specific jobs; and the ability to apply that information and knowledge to the solution of familiar and new problems.

- Personal management skills that allow them to develop and demonstrate the attitudes, abilities, behaviors and decision-making processes associated with responsibility and dependability.

- Teamwork skills that enable them to function effectively as members of multiple work teams and contribute to groups in accomplishing work tasks.

Presented as part of the April 22, 1988 Task Force report to the Iacocca-Fraser Commission, the Employability Skills Profile which appears on the next page provides further elaboration of these broad skill categories.

It was not the intent of the Task Force to identify specific skills associated with individual jobs. Rather, the Task Force understood its charge as defining the generic skills and behaviors employers believe to be important across a broad range of business, service, and industrial sector jobs.

Also, the Task Force did not attempt to identify the specific course materials, programs, or classroom content required to teach the identified skills nor was it the intent or desire of the Task Force to promote a single assessment instrument or test to measure them.

And, the Task Force purposely avoided references to specific grades or grade levels in its definition of skills. Most employers find these references and measures of little value in accurately defining what is required for success in the workforce.

However, the Employability Skills Task Force did offer policy recommendations intended to support a strategy for preparing both Michigan's students and adults to confront the challenges of competing in a national and global economy.

And, at Governor Blanchard's request, Pete Pestillo agreed to continue to chair the Task Force into a second phase of its work -- overseeing and providing policy guidance to the state agencies on that strategy.

The Task Force was also appointed by the Michigan State Board of Education to serve as the policy advisory group on the development of an employability skills assessment to be used in the state's high schools.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROFILE

Three Categories of skills will be required of Michigan workers in the future:

ACADEMIC SKILLS (Those skills which provide the basic foundation necessary for a person to get, keep, and progress on a job)	PERSONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS (Those skills related to developing the attitudes and behaviors required to get, keep, and progress on a job)	TEAMWORK SKILLS (Those skills needed to work with others on a job)
MICHIGAN EMPLOYERS WANT A PERSON WHO CAN: o Understand spoken language and speak in the language in which business is conducted. o Read written materials (including graphs, charts and displays). o Write in the language in which business is conducted. o Understand and solve problems involving basic arithmetic and use the results. o Use the tools and equipment necessary to get a job done. o Access and use specialized knowledge when necessary (e.g., the sciences or skilled trades) to get a job done. o Think and act logically by using the steps of the Scientific Method (i.e., identify problems, collect information, form opinions and draw conclusions).	MICHIGAN EMPLOYERS WANT A PERSON WHO CAN: o Identify personal job-related interests, strengths, options and opportunities. o Demonstrate personal values and ethics in the workplace (e.g., honesty, fairness, and respect for others). o Exercise a sense of responsibility. o Demonstrate self control. o Show pride in one's work. o Be enthusiastic about the work to be done. o Follow written or verbal directions. o Learn new skills and ways of doing things. o Identify and suggest new ideas for getting a job done. o Be a leader or a follower depending upon what is necessary to get a job done.	MICHIGAN EMPLOYERS WANT A PERSON WHO CAN: o Identify with the goals, norms, values, customs and culture of the group. o Communicate with all members of a group. o Show sensitivity to the thoughts and opinions of others in a group. o Use a team approach to identify problems and devise solutions to get a job done. o Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results. o Function in changing work-settings and in changing groups. o Determine when to be a leader or a follower depending upon what is necessary to get a job done. o Show sensitivity to the needs of women and ethnic and racial minorities. o Be loyal to a group.

To address this expanded charge, the Task Force added more representatives from education, state government and the unions. While the original Task Force was constituted to represent the employer perspective, the addition of these new members permitted the group to function as a coalition of constituencies, all equally concerned with the future of our economy and the preparation of our workforce. (See Appendix 1 for a listing of current Task Force membership.)

In October, 1988, a meeting of the newly expanded Task Force was held to review priorities and plans for implementing the recommendations contained in the initial report, and to decide on an organizational structure to address those priorities. Four Standing Committees were created and chairs were named to head those Committees. The Committees and their missions are as follows:

- The Communications Committee - is responsible for devising a plan to communicate with the general public as well as special interest constituencies on the work of the Task Force. Also, the Committee considers strategies to expand the forum role of the Task Force so that a broader array of groups and individuals have an opportunity to present their opinions and views on issues related to education and the workplace.

- The Legislative Committee - follows and advises on legislation related to employability skills development. The Committee also considers the specific legislation related to the Employability Skills Assessment.

- The Education Systems Development Committee - reviews the major needs of the educational system (K-university and alternative and employment and training) in preparing students and participants with the skills required for success in the workforce. Also, the Committee identifies strategies for addressing those needs.

- The Assessment Committee - works closely with the Michigan Department of Education staff to ensure that the assessment development effort is reflective of the concerns of client constituencies, is usable by those constituencies, produces results in a format that is understandable to educators and other service providers and employers, and is based on the best in practice assessment techniques.

The Employability Skills Task Force has met formally five times since the last report in April, 1988. The purpose of this report is to:

- Present our progress in working together with the state to create an effective employability skills development strategy for both youth and adults

- Indicate our work priorites for the coming year

- Highlight our belief that despite the difficulties and the obvious complexities of undertaking an effort that requires intensive collaboration and trust, we are all committed partners in ensuring a skilled, competent and competitive Michigan workforce for today and tomorrow.

SECTION 2: EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TASK FORCE: PROGRESS UPDATE

Over the course of the last year, the Task Force has made significant progress on three fronts: (1) we have taken action to implement the four general policy recommendations contained in the first report, (2) the Standing Committees have been able to focus attention on specific issues of concern to the Task Force, and (3) we have initiated a working structure to facilitate our collaboration with the state agencies, specifically the Departments of Education, Commerce, Labor, Management and Budget, the Governor's Cabinet Council on Human Investment, and the Human Investment Fund.

Progress on Policy Recommendations:

In its April 22, 1988 report, the Employability Skills Task Force identified four policy recommendations intended to guide the actions taken to prepare Michigan citizens to confront the competitive challenges facing us today. Progress has been made on all of those recommendations.

- **Establish a forum to encourage communication among business and labor leaders, educators and state agency representatives.**

  The Task Force broadened its membership so that it, in fact, can represent the concerns, ideas, and strategies of a number of constituencies interested in ensuring the preparation and competitiveness of Michigan's current and future workforce.

- **The Employability Skills Profile should be used by the Governor and appropriate governmental units to guide the activities of the state's employment and training and education systems.**

  We have been very successful in institutionalizing the Profile. It has formed the framework for the development of the school-based assessment mandated in the legislation, it is being integrated into the Department of Labor's assessment and training process, and it has been adopted by the Human Investment Fund. Also, it has been accepted by many local groups concerned with preparation for employment (i.e., Detroit Compact definition of "job readiness").

- **Public and private sector employers should monitor worldwide competition and then communicate information on the skills required for that competition to the employment and training and education systems.**

  Michigan took a first step in that regard by conducting a survey of several thousand employers in the state. The survey confirmed that the skills included in the Profile were critical for success. And, the findings reinforced the importance of teamwork and personal management skills to success in the workplace.

- **An advisory team of qualified consultants be identified to oversee the development of the employability skills assessment.**

  The Department of Education has called together expert consultant teams with the advice of the Task Force and invited Task Force representation on those teams.

Standing Committee Progress:

Each of the Standing Committees has had at least one formal meeting over the past year to identify specific concerns or issues for Task Force attention.

- Assessment Committee

  Chaired by Sue Ann Hise-Denk, Kelly Services, the Assessment Committee has worked closely with Department of Education staff on the development of the employer survey and advised on the development of the youth assessment.

  The Committee has been particularly helpful in focusing attention on the Task Force commitment to viewing assessment as a diagnostic, prescriptive process that does not rely on a single indicator of employability. And, they have highlighted the need to coordinate the assessment development activities so that the youth and adult assessment components are consonant and can form the basis for a cohesive employability skills development system.

- Communications Committee

  Chaired by Dwight Carlson, Perceptron, the Communications Committee has also met several times and has focused on two near-term objectives. They are working to:

  - Establish clear channels of communication with each group that will be impacted by the work of the Task Force. Teachers, principals, superintendents, school boards, parents and students are examples of targeted groups. Rather than duplicate existing efforts, the Communications Standing Committee has made a conscious effort to team up with those organizations and individuals already producing publications for these groups.

  - Develop a single brochure that will provide answers to several of the questions that are frequently asked about the work of the Task Force. The first draft of this brochure was presented to the Task Force at the October 6, 1989 meeting.

- Legislative Committee

  Chaired by Larry Chunovich, Michigan Education Association, the Legislative Standing Committee is assuming more active status this fall as the legislation directly affecting the work of the Task Force is reviewed and amended. Essentially, the Committee will inform the legislature of Task Force positions on such issues as the diagnostic, prescriptive purpose of the assessment, and the need for a remediation program or plan for those students and adults in need of skill enhancement.

- Education Systems Development Committee

  Chaired by Judy Lanier and Charles Thompson, Michigan State University, the Education Systems Development Standing Committee has met to initiate discussions on what will be required of the educational delivery system that must prepare people with the identified employability skills. They have concluded that what is needed is not a required employability skills class but rather an integration of these skills into all aspects of the curriculum. And, the Committee highlighted the importance of assuring that the educational delivery system is, in fact, preparing to address the three skill categories as the assessment is developed, implemented and refined.

State Agency/Employability Skills Task Force Working Structure: Progress Update

At a March 10, 1989 Employability Skills Policy Summit meeting, an agreement was reached to formalize a collaborative working structure between the Departments of Education, Labor, Commerce, Management and Budget, the Cabinet Council and the Human Investment Fund on the employability skills issue and for the state agencies to then forge a collective working relationship with the Task Force. A summary of that meeting and the agreements reached is included in Appendix 3.

To facilitate that collaboration, a Technical Advisory Group was established which included representatives from all of the above agencies. Chaired by Deborah Grether, Michigan Department of Labor, a small working committee of the Technical Advisory Group has been conducting regular meetings since the Spring to ensure that the agencies develop common policies and operating assumptions for implementation of the employability skills assessment. And, the working committee has identified both formal and informal channels of communication between those agencies and the Task Force.

Also, the committee has been actively involved in the search for a director of the state's employability skills project. Several candidates have been interviewed and they expect to announce an appointment to the position shortly.

The director will assume responsibility for overseeing the coordination of the work of the various state agencies on this effort, and will ensure the effective implementation of the employability skills strategy. As currently conceived, the successful candidate will report to both Shelby Solomon, Director, Management and Budget, and to Donald Bemis, Superintendent, Michigan Department of Education. He/she will also work closely with Pete Pestillo, Task Force Chair, and other members of the Task Force as appropriate.

In sum, we believe the Employability Skills Task Force has been successful in accomplishing the following:

- We do indeed represent a coalition of interests and groups that have not traditionally worked together.

- We have served as a catalyst for establishing a collaborative working relationship between the various state agencies concerned with creating and maintaining a viable Michigan workforce.

- We have seen the Employability Skills Profile become an integral part of the state's employability skills strategy.

- We have initiated changes in the approach to employability assessment -- focusing on an assessment process rather than a single test -- and we have provided guidance on the need for an employability skills system that stresses diagnosis, prescription and service delivery to clients.

- We have formed a strong working partnership with the state agencies, and we have every confidence that relationship will continue to develop.

We are pleased with the progress the Task Force has made over the last year. We recognize that true collaboration is not easily achieved. It is built on trust and sustained successful working relationships.

We believe we have built the base for such a collaboration between the Task Force and the state agencies and that we have been instrumental in forging closer ties between those agencies.

We enter this next year confident that our working relationships will grow stronger and more effective and that the outcome of this collaboration will be a uniquely cohesive and integrated employability skills development system designed to serve all Michigan citizens.

SECTION 3: EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TASK FORCE PRIORITIES, 1989-1990

We have identified three priorities for Task Force attention in this coming year:

- Legislative Awareness

  The Task Force will develop and implement a plan for encouraging the legislature to focus on the need for an employability skills development strategy that emphasizes diagnosis, prescription, and service delivery. We do not intend to advocate additional legislation. We see our role as engaging in a dialogue with the legislators about the concerns of all our represented constituencies. And, we plan to share our collective views on an employability skills strategy that will best serve the citizens of Michigan.

- Communications

  The Task Force will increase its efforts to communicate with the general public about the progress made on the development of an employability skills strategy. We will pay particular attention to the information needs of teachers, counselors, principals, parents, employment and training professionals and community leaders. A public relations strategy building on existing channels of communication with these constituencies will be refined and implemented.

- Policy Oversight

  The Task Force will continue to play an active policy role in overseeing the development of the youth assessment component, will attend to the adult assessment development, and will work with the state agencies to ensure a timely and successful implementation of Michigan's employability skills strategy.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

Workplace literacy and preparation for employment have been the subjects of national as well as state attention. Essentially, the reports written on the subject and the speeches made by national, state and local leaders all stress a common set of messages.

- Technological advances and heightened domestic and international competition challenge American workers to be more skilled than ever before.

- The expectations about and content of work have changed dramatically.

- The economic future requires a focus on people, teamwork, and technology.

- While new technologies may sometimes mean that the depth of skill needed for any particular job may be declining, the range of required skills is increasing.

- Changing production processes, competitive challenges and the shifting of the economic base from manufacturing to the service and information sectors is causing employers to use an array of strategies that require flexibility, innovation, responsibility, and teamwork on the part of employees.

- In fact, employers will need and demand workers who have a broad set of workplace skills. These skills include a higher order of academic and problem-solving abilities, the ability to contribute to a group and to function on multiple work teams, and the ability to demonstrate responsibility, reliability and dependability.

In sum, the studies support what most employers already know -- they will need workers who know how to learn new information and skills; use information obtained in one context and apply it in another; solve problems and work with others in the achievement of work objectives. In short, employers need employees who are adaptable and flexible so that they can meet the demands of an increasingly technological and changing workplace.

Michigan's commitment to developing a collaborative and comprehensive system that will prepare both youth and adults with the skills required for adaptability and for their role in the modern workplace is both laudable and unique in the nation.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this partnership to design and implement the state's employability skills development strategy. It is an investment of time and energy that is sure to yield a high rate of return for all of us.

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To be competitive in a world economy, our workforce must have the skills to compete. In order to succeed, we must share a common mission between our education system, the community, the government and business. Each must understand the other's needs, and be supportive of them before there can be a common purpose. Governor Blanchard's Employability Skills Task Force set the direction last year with the "Employability Skills Profile," which identified skills and behaviors in three areas: Academic, Personal Management, and Teamwork.

The perceived needs of our present day workforce, and the expectations in the twenty-first century (the class of 2002 has entered the schools this year) must direct our education and job training programs. The perceptions of employers and educators on the employability skills of the Michigan workforce are essential to the planning for future programs and modifications of current ones. The Employability Skills Survey was conducted to provide information that will help us begin a common dialogue of the present day needs among the various constituents of our state as a step toward better education and job training programs.

About the survey

The survey was developed jointly by the Employability Skills Task Force and the Michigan Department of Education. The purpose of the survey was to validate the Employability Skills Profile. The survey design benefited from advice from nationally recognized research consultants. Advice from samples of Michigan businesses was also sought. The Assessment Committee of the Task Force assisted in the final development. The questionnaire consisted of items reflecting the three major areas of Academic, Personal Management and Teamwork skills, which were defined by the Task Force as follows:

> Academic Skills include those skills that provide the basic educational foundation necessary to benefit from further training and education. This category encompasses communication, comprehension, quantitative, critical thinking, and science and technology skills.
>
> Personal Management Skills include those skills related to developing the attitudes, abilities, behaviors and decision making processes associated with responsibility and dependability. Contained within this category are abilities to: set goals and implement strategies for achieving them, identify and act on personal values, and to demonstrate self discipline.
>
> Teamwork Skills include those skills that relate to an individual's ability to contribute to a group or organization's growth and development. Included in this category are interpersonal, organizational, negotiation, creativity/innovation, and leadership skills.

Respondents rated the items in terms of importance to the work environment. A pilot survey of a random sample of 200 businesses was conducted to test the validity of the survey.

The questionnaire was modified for surveying teachers and principals. Although the items were identical, the respondents were also asked to what extent they felt graduates would need a particular skill, and to what extent their school's population graduated with that skill.

Sample Design

The employer sample was obtained by taking a stratified random sample of 7,500 employer businesses from approximately 140,000 total businesses in the Michigan Employment Security Commission's ES202 1987 database. The sample was designed to ensure that the goods vs. service producing, all size businesses, and public and non-public employers were equally represented. A return rate of 37% (2752 responses) was obtained.

Major Findings

- The skills identified within each of the three categories of the Employability Skills Profile, i.e., Personal Management, Teamwork and Academic Skills, were substantiated by the survey.
- Michigan employers across industries, from both large and small businesses, agree that the following skills and behaviors are among those needed in their employees: Academic, such as oral and writtten communication, reading, basic mathematical computations, and problem solving; Personal Management, such as responsibility, integrity, dependability, respect for others, enthusiasm and pride in work; and Teamwork, such as communicating and working cooperatively with others, working effectively within the organization, and being receptive to improved ways of working.
- Employers from representative Michigan industries and business of all sizes agree that Personal Management, Teamwork, and basic Academic skills are needed by all of their employees. The way employers responded to the discrete Academic Skills tended to reflect the specialized needs of different types of industries.
- School principals and teachers responded in a very similar fashion to employers in the three skill areas, with the teachers emphasizing academic and career development skills more than the employers and principals.
- In an open-ended question on future needs of the workplace, Academic Skills were most often mentioned, with computer knowledge and verbal communication frequently cited.

These results point to the need for educators and employers to examine future trends in the needs of the workplace, and determine the implications for education and training.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TASK FORCE:
REVISED SUMMARY PAPER FOR POLICY SUMMIT

The City Club
Lansing, MI
12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
March 10, 1989

Meeting Purpose:

The Employability Skills Task Force has been concerned about: the lack of clear direction and parameters for the development of the employability skills assessment; and the relationship of the Task Force to other components of Michigan's human investment system. This meeting is intended to begin the discussion that will hopefully clarify these issues. The specific objective of this meeting is to obtain agreement on:

- The need for a core set of outcomes for both youth and adults that will become the focus of a human investment strategy directed at employability
- The operating assumptions that will guide the work of the Employability Skills Task Force
- Priorities for that work
- Initial staff resources required to support the work of the Task Force
- The need for this Policy Summit Group to meet on a regular basis

The following sections of the paper are intended to focus and stimulate discussion. Please view them primarily as a proposal for the Summit Group's review and consideration.

Objective 1 - Review of Task Force Role/Goals

The Role of the Employability Skills Task Force: The Employability Skills Task Force reports to the Governor, the Governor's Commission on Jobs and Economic Development, and the Michigan State Board of Education. The Task Force will serve as a key link between state agencies and the business, and labor communities on the state's human investment strategy, specifically as it relates to preparing youth and adults for the workforce.

Task Force Goal: The goal of the Task Force is to provide policy advice and oversight, as appropriate, on the implementation of an integrated human investment system. This system should ensure that all Michigan citizens possess the skills they need to find and maintain employment in a rapidly developing society.

Objective 2 - Seek Agreement On:

a. operating assumptions
b. work plan and priorities
c. staff resources

a. Operating Assumptions: The Employability Skills Task Force believes that an effective human investment system for Michigan should:

- Involve all of the public service and education providers
- Acknowledge the unique roles, constituencies, practices and regulations of participating programs and systems
- Specify a core set of common academic, personal management and teamwork outcomes for both youth and adults

. Provide for instruction related to these outcomes and for remediation when necessary

- In order to accomplish this, state leaders need to recognize that the complex thinking and learning required by this specification of outcomes will be achieved by changing the way instruction is delivered and learning is measured. Support will need to be given to educational providers to assist them in making these changes.

. Offer a systematic assessment process to measure and diagnose these skills in individuals.

- Although initially different, but comparable, assessment procedures may be in use, the human investment system's participating agencies and institutions should commit to pursuing one common Michigan employability assessment process with specified youth and adult components. The creation of the youth assessment is the responsibility of the Michigan Department of Education. The development of the adult component should be guided by adult education and training service providers.

- Responsibility for modifying and monitoring that process, once developed, should ultimately jointly rest with the Human Investment Fund Board and the State Board of Education.

- From the outset, the assessment process should be designed to produce employability profiles for individuals rather than a single indicator or score of employability.

- Most importantly, the assessment should primarily be used for diagnostic/prescriptive purposes rather than to sort out individuals who are employable from those who are unemployable.

- Further, assessment data should be useful to policy makers and program designers.

- And, the assessment should be accepted by employers and the general public.

b. Work Plan and Priorities

The Task Force will:

. Assist the Michigan Department of Education in the validation of the Employability Skills Profile. This validation should be completed by June, 1989.

. Develop recommendations and educational plans to provide appropriate instruction and remediation for youth and adults. The Task Force's Standing Committee on Educational Systems Development recognizes the breadth of the task before them and ultimately the state's education system. Their recommendations will reflect a comprehensive and long term approach to promoting the required transformation in educational delivery. An initial report will be prepared by this Standing Committee in June, 1989.

. Help define and recommend an assessment strategy based on that Profile.

  - The Task Force's first priority in that regard is the development of the in-school assessment which is to be piloted in 1990-91. However, given the Summit Group's approval and staff support, we will simultaneously encourage an exploration of: existing adult and youth assessment measures to determine their applicability to the Profile; and current Educational Testing Service/U.S. Department of Labor projects to develop what may become a nationally mandated assessment for JTPA populations. A progress report on work to date will be available in June, 1989.

  - A consistent and comprehensive assessment process requires the cooperation of all appropriate state agency directors and staff. They will need to unify and coordinate ongoing activities and jointly agree to and oversee necessary developmental efforts.

. Communicate information about the work of the Task Force, employer expectations, and the upcoming assessment to the general public as well as specific educator, employer, labor and community constituencies. This work has begun and will continue throughout the life of the Task Force.

c. Staff Resources: To date, the Task Force has operated with staff support from the Michigan Department of Education and Task Force membership. However, in order to complete the tasks outlined above, we recommended that a staff technical advisory group be identified to support the work of the Task Force.

This recommendation was accepted by the Policy Summit Group. The staff group will include representatives from the Departments of Labor, Commerce, Social Services, Education, the Cabinet Council, Human Investment Fund, and the Governor's Office of Job Training.

The Employability Skills Task Force Technical Advisory Group will be linked to the Human Investment Fund Board and will report to both the Human Investment Fund Board and the Task Force.

MICHIGAN EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS STRATEGY

STATE AGENCY WORK PLAN

Management Structure

Development of the employability skills training and education programs and assessment process will be placed under the jurisdiction of the Human Investment Fund Board and the State Board of Education. The coordination necessary to implement the skills training and assessment process throughout state departments will be coordinated though the Human Investment Fund structure.

A project director will be hired by the fund to oversee the completion of the work plan. The Technical Advisory Group established within the fund will provide the forum for policy and program development related to employability skills. A development team will be formed of state department staff responsible for training and education programs and assessment. The project director will work with the team to complete tasks related to the work plan and as researchers to identify issues within each department related to the implementation of the employability skills programs and assessment process. The project director also will identify tasks to be completed by consultants and other advisory groups.

Recognizing the legislative initiative governing the State Board of Education, the project director will be responsible for ensuring that the assessment developed by the state is consistent in the youth and adult training and education systems to meet employability skill needs.

Model Development Outline

1. Model Definition

   A. **Identification of Skill Indicators** - The model will be based on indicators that link training and education to successful employment. Employability Skills indicators may include academic skills such as workplace reading literacy, i.e., reading technical manuals, charts and graphs, personal management skills such as attendance and punctuality, etc.

      Date: Completed

   B. **Identification of Indicator Measures** - Methodology for measurement of the skills indicators may vary between youth and adult systems. Methodology will be evaluated and presented to the Technical Advisory Group.

      Date: December 1989

   C. **Identification of Best Practices** - In order not to overlook current successful practices in existing youth and adult assessment, "best practices" found nationally and internationally will be reviewed and reported to the Technical Advisory Group. Best practices will be based on criteria approved by the Technical Advisory Group.

      Date: December 1989

D. **Identification and Assessment of Existing Practices (field mapping)** - Employability skills assessment practices within local and state agencies/educational delivery systems, universities, business and industry and national institutions of research and testing will be identified and reported to Technical Advisory Group.

Date: February 1990

E. **Analysis and Recommendation** - Analysis completed and recommendation of a preferred model developed to be presented to the Employability Skills Task Force and the Human Investment Fund Board.

Date: April 1990

2. Model Delivery System

A. **Evaluation of Existing Systems With Regard to Preferred Models** - Existing delivery systems for youth and adults will be examined for current practices, potential barriers to implementation and current resources. Other implementation problems may also be revealed through the Human Investment System pilots.

Date: February 1990

B. **Corrective Action** - Response to potential barriers and resource needs identified will be developed and presented for review to the Technical Advisory Group.

Date: August 1990

3. Testing the Model

To meet the separate deadlines for the needs of the Human Investment System as well as the educational system, different pilot test dates will be established.

A. Preliminary testing within the Human Investment System pilots will occur in the Spring of 1990.

B. Preliminary and formal testing of the assessment process in the K-12 system will occur according to the deadlines established by the governing legislation.

C. Goal for full implementation in all systems will be 1992.

"Our goal must be to educate our children to be the best in the world and give every adult the knowledge and skills to succeed in the new workplace."

Governor James J. Blanchard
State of the State Message
February, 1989